

CAC Meeting
9/10/08
FWP Public Meeting Room

Present: John Fraley, Jim Vashro, Dave Landstrom, Jim Williams, Lee Anderson, Alan Wood, Richard Peterson, Martha Abbrescia, Jim Satterfield, Mike Feldmann, Justin Sliter, Mark Sheets, Darrell Coverdell, Tammy Fisher, Terry Connor, Chuck Williams, Jim Morey, Dan Savage, Tim Engleson, and Bill Geer from the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

Dave Landstrom- Acquisition: New one in Sanders Co (Paradise) bridge. 1.8 Million on North Shore of Flathead Lake. EA is out (executive summary handed out to all). Public meeting is tomorrow night. Unique because one of the few that would be a state park / WMA. Closest thing is Freezeout Lake. 20-25 acres would be a state park footprint. The remaining 140 – 160 acres would be WMA (Waterfowl Production Acre). Joint proposal \$1.8 million from Access Montana, Land Trust \$80,000 is contributing.

Hunting season preview, results of game surveys / Jim Williams

Handout: FWP's NW Montana Big Game Survey and Inventory Program 2008. JW asked for the CAC to read through this handout and let JW know if it is understandable? Would like to use this handout to better define what the core responsibilities of biologists are so that this can be used as informational to legislators. Please get comments back to JW by 9/17/08. If too technical, too little, too much? Please let me know.

Power Point Presentation

Examples given of how animal populations are determined (helicopter & truck). Classified over 5000 WT deer this spring. Indicates stable / no changes.

There are once again older-age class bucks on public lands. Elk: Calf/Cow ration is down a little bit. Mule deer populations have been steadily increasing. Moose: 27 moose calves per 100. Mountain Goats: 33 kids per 100 adults. Lion permits are working!

Bill Geer – Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership:

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Believes responsible development can be achieved when conservation, restoration and mitigation sciences are kept in fore front. Sportsman User Value Mapping is being used to capture the most important biological spots. They show legislators the places that sportsmen value the most to be reserved prior to development. (The most important areas where hunting and fishing occur.)

Industrialized ranges are no longer suitable for hunting. Working with many rod & gun clubs throughout the state (40 clubs in 30 Montana cities). This information is entered directly into GIS maps by sportsman. While building the network of hunters and anglers to politically support hunting & fishing interest. The state of Montana has a \$1.2 billion dollar wildlife industry. Most effective use is to provide baseline information to BLM, USFS, & DNRC to guide oil & gas leasing in balance with wildlife and sportsman needs. Supports Montana Wildlife Action Plan and Crucial Areas and Corridors Initiative of Western Governors Association. Identifies parcels in lease sales needing stronger protection of hunting & fishing opportunities. Identifies key high-use areas warranting special conservation strategies. Identifies areas needing additional public access. Makes us more persuasive when advocating for overarching national resource development policies and laws.

“Last child in the woods describes a generation so plugged into electronic devices that it has lost its connection to the natural world.”

1. Go fish – get the passion back in kids
2. Let's what remember what matters most.
3. Hunting is not a matter of life or death – it's much more important than that.

Jim Vashro: Major overhaul of fishing regulations happened last year. Right now, there are three proposals out including bull trout. Needs comments by Friday morning (9/12/08).

Review minutes of last meeting, Brainstorm CAC discussion issues for the 2008/09 term.

1. What is status on Pike in the lower Flathead River? JV – provided extra information to CAC members that asked specific questions. Are the numbers down? We take a lot of pike every year...it has to have an affect.
2. T Falls – Big Horn Sheep viewing area (Big Horn Sheep WMA) has closed at the title company. You own it forever as of now. There will be a spot for parking installed.
3. Fall Turkey tags – interest seems pretty low. Haven't heard much on this topic.
4. Green box site in Marion – The county is proposing to close this site. What will the impact be when folks start leaving there garbage. Better update will come at next meeting
5. WCT Project: The Commission Meeting on 7/17. There was an opportunity for public comment. It basically came down to a vote, the majority of commissioners voted to move forward. Limits have been lifted on the lake that will be chemically treated in the upcoming weeks. Committed to having Annual public meetings.

6. **Block Management maps – there is currently a test on maps happening online for R7. “They” must not understand what we’re asking for. What is wanted is the detailed individual maps that are currently available only by contacting the specific region. Why aren’t these maps available for download? They exist and should be easier to obtain when you want them.**
7. McGregor Lake – ramp is operational. Crystal lake is currently in the design phase. Lake Five is still in legal limbo – getting close to releasing a new EA that has been prepared by independent third party. Within a couple of months, the EA should be on the streets and information on public meeting schedule. New access on McWenegar Slough – it is open for public access. Lower Flathead near Perma is going to be put together this fall. This will give another access point and a good float down to Paradise.
8. Do we have the same wolves we had 100 years ago – All are canis lupis some were in BC, some were in MT.
9. Are any more sheep being removed this year from WHI? Not this year, however, there was a large population growth...there’s a large number of kids.

On another note: Justin Sliter introduced CAC members to be aware of the bond initiative approved by the county commissioners for up to \$10 million to purchase land or easements in Flathead County. These funds, when combined with other public and private funding sources could be leveraged to keep thousands of acres of farm and recreational property in it’s current use. Justin asked for everyone’s help to spread the word and vote YES for clean water and open land. Also, you may consider making a donation: Committee for Clean Water and Open Lands, PO Box 3368, Kalispell, MT 59903. 406-752-8293; or 406-270-0603. For more information, see: <http://www.flatheadlandandwater.com>

CAC Roundtable

1. Mill Town Dam – will there be testing on the fish to test for sediment levels? Is there feedback on the fish populations since they have done this?
2. Sanders County is coming up with Sanders Co Resource Plan. Available on website,
3. Wilcox Wildlife Range & Grazing, some folks complaining that there are cows walking around up on the ridge.
4. Parking around some of our access sites – inadequate.
5. Received positive feedback on wolverine trapping.
6. Invite your legislator to your backyard BBQ.
7. Are you expecting anything from Footloose this year? (Regarding trapping & legislature)
8. Couple of complaints in the Eureka area re: Deer B tags...they’re sold out too soon. Remember that Surplus tags are just that – if they are real

- important to you – put in the drawing and encourage others to do so as well.
9. What is the rumor about bringing spiked elk hunting back to MT. JW answers that it is not being discussed here.

Issues 2008-09 season:

1. Block Management (see item 6 above).
2. South Fork WCT updates – keep getting word out. (Request that information goes on the Outdoor Page in the Interlake.)
3. Plum Creek real estate transactions – need to maintain hunting & fishing access when they sell off these large parcels. Several different issues as far as Plum Creek is concerned. There's plenty to talk about. While line up a speaker. It might be accessing other public lands behind their lands as well. Complete overview needed. The current numbers of easements that are on their land deals have nothing to do with public access. Access agreements between the USFS and Plum Creek – what are these about? Why is this news ran primarily in Missoula but not so much in the Interlake? Flathead and Lake County have been relatively silent. Some of the roads around TCL have been identified as “feeder” roads for some reason.
4. Mountain Caribou – is anyone advocating for this? What are we doing, where are we at?
5. Wolves relisted – connectivity has not been established. What is being done to establish this? Keep us updated.
6. Sunsets during legislative year? What are they? Will Helena give updates on all important legislative issues? JS will talk to DO about the possibility of inviting candidates to next meeting around 10/22.

Next meeting date is 10/22/08